

# LOADSTAR LETTER #58



## C-64 Audio CD Goes Aluminum

By Jeff Jones. Chris Abbott emailed me about a year ago, telling me of his C-64 audio project. His goal was to professionally reproduce well-loved Commodore demo and game tunes. He pulls this off quite well, using MIDI equipment I wish I had access to. I never doubted that the CD would arrive because I had already accessed his MIDI files from his website at

<http://www.c64audio.com>

He emailed me a couple of weeks ago, excited that he had sold his 400th CD. I asked him to send me a copy. I must say that I was surprised at the quality of the production. This is the kind of stuff I would listen to anyway. These CDs were not manufactured on a PC. They were professionally produced and contain a nice little booklet with

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[jeff@LOADSTAR.com](mailto:jeff@LOADSTAR.com)

US MAIL: ATTN. Jeff Jones  
J & F Publishing  
P.O. Box 30008 Shreveport  
LA 71130-0008  
Phone: 318/221-8718,  
Fax: 318/221-8870

explanations for each song along with a Rob Hubbard interview.

I might add that I enjoy listening to the CD, particularly tracks 15 and 8. The CD is reviewed later on in this issue.

Chris Abbott, High Technology Publishing Ltd. Digital Studio Reproductions of Commodore 64 Themes Back in Time CD Now Available. See Website for order details EMail: [chris@c64audio.com](mailto:chris@c64audio.com), <http://www.c64audio.com>

## Arcane Studios Does Not Call It Quits

By Jeff Jones. Even as last month's Loadstar Letter was being printed, the Email flowed, and Robin Harbron informed me that Jonathan Mines had reconsidered his actions. So for now, we still have Arcane Studios.

## CMD Has Wheels In Stock. Offers Special Price On FD-2000s For Loadstar Customers

By Jeff Jones. Charlie Jr. at CMD wants you to know that they have Wheels in stock. Wheels, the new Geos overlay, is the brainchild of Maurice Randall and breathes new life into Geos. I use it almost daily.

Charlie also says that if you mention Loadstar, you can get your CMD FD-2000 for \$150.00. That's \$29.00 off the regular \$179.00 price. The FD-2000 is compatible with Double-Density disks (800K) in both CMD and 1581 formats, and High Density disks (1.6 MB) commonly used at 1.44 MB on other computer platforms. Note that due to a more efficient formatting method, the FD-2000 provides a higher capacity than the same disk formatted on an IBM compatible or Macintosh computer.

FD Series drives are capable of reading and writing three basic formats: 1581 (800K), CMD (800K, 1.6 MB) and MS-DOS (720K, 1.44 MB). The first format, 1581, is rather obvious -- FD's can read and write standard 1581 disks, making it an ideal replacement for 1581 drives.



## Wheels Rocks!

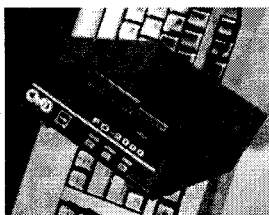
By Jeff Jones. Like I said, I never really appreciated Geos that much, but Wheels made Geos so useful and quick in my native mode partitions that I use it all the time now. Any Geos user with an REU or RAMLink should think about buying Wheels.

For me Wheels' claim to fame is its total disregard for device types. For the longest I was never able to get my RAMLink to work with Geos, despite everything CMD ever said. I did enjoy enhanced speed with Geos on my hard drive, but it choked on my RAMLink. Wheels loves my RAMLink. It even loves my RAMLink at 20 MHz — and it makes use of my 8-megabyte RAM card in the SuperCPU. Like I said, this thing rocks!

I was a bit miffed that a few of the features weren't implemented yet. There seemed to be no way to change the screen color back to gray. Maurice chose a default cyan, which I just don't like. I'll admit that I only skimmed the manual except for the very sobering installation procedure. While following the instructions, I got the impression that if I missed a step, my 1541 would blow up.

Once again, I think Maurice was a bit too concerned with piracy. You can only install Wheels using an original protected Geos disk. This is all noble and great, but there are plenty of people out there with original Geos disks that are ten years old and more! My own Geos disk *died* the day after I installed Wheels. Not because of Wheels, but because I was trying to configure it for other things. Had I trashed my original disk one day earlier, I might not have been able to install Wheels — even though I have a fresh and working unprotected copy of Geos on my hard drive.

Once you make a Wheels disk, you have a perfectly cloneable Geos disk. I file-copied my Wheels disk from its original 1541 to my RAMLink and it worked. I then file copied it to an FD-



2000 disk and it continued to work.

It allowed me to easily navigate my hard drive and clean it up. Wheels will delete whole subdirectories in a snap. Warning though: it doesn't free up blocks of the files inside the directory. You'll have to validate your disk afterwards. If there are any Geos files in the partition, you should validate from within Wheels. Robin Harbron and I will collaborate on an in-depth review next issue.

## Preparing files For Your MS-DOS Friends

By Jeff Jones. When you use Big Blue Reader or Little Red Reader to copy files to an MS-DOS disk for your PC buddies or your own use there are a few concepts you should firmly understand. First the PC user is ruled by file name. After all, MS-DOS and Windows are truly Disk Operating systems. The PC doesn't know what to do with a file unless it knows what's contained in the file. So when you copy a Loadstar table of contents file to a PC disk, it can cause problems if you don't let the PC know that it's a text file. Text files are generally named file.txt. You can't depend on your PC friend to do this. In fact Windows users may be so shielded from this that they don't even know that text files end in .txt. All they'll know is that they clicked on it and nothing happened.

Commodore computers have a much more free file-name system. We can use sixteen characters and place a dot anywhere in the filename. Because 1541 drives aren't capable of using wildcards to search for suffixes, we often use prefixes instead of suffixes. Hence Loadstar's endless stream of:

t.files  
p.files  
b.files.

If we all had 1581s and FD-2000s, we could easily use:

file.txt  
file.pak  
file.exe

The extension for Koala files file.koa. Converted Geos files are files.geo. I'm not sure what Doodle files are called, but if I were to send one to a PC user, I'd

send a file.doo and hope he can fix it if it's incorrect. The PC programs that convert Commodore graphics must be fed proper filenames before they'll act.

PetASCII to True ASCII can cause confusion. Basically the rule is that you *don't* automatically convert all Commodore files to ASCII. You only convert your Commodore Text files to ASCII. On the other hand you'll probably always want to convert MS-DOS files to PetASCII when you're copying them to your Commodore. That is unless these files are binary (GIFs and such).

If we Commodore users were locked into a file convention, Little Red Reader and Big Blue Reader would know what to do with each file, but we save our files under any old name and sort it all out later. Only PetASCII files like those saved by Edstar must be translated to ASCII before being copied to an MS-DOS disk. TWS and SpeedScript files must be converted to ASCII or PetASCII before they can be copied unless you're copying to an Amiga (A64's file copier supports the screen code of TWS and SpeedScript).

If a file is already ASCII, such as a converted Geowrite file, there is no need to convert it to ASCII. Doing so is superfluous and might cause the converter to introduce errors.

Binary files such as graphic files and D64 files absolutely must *not* be converted! Talk about destroying a file! Binary files almost assuredly will contain some characters that the converter will see as PetASCII and they will be erroneously converted. That would be fine if it were text, but if it's a .D64 file, then you will have messed up nearly every track and sector on the .D64 file. As a rule, if you can't load the file and read it or especially if you type it to the screen with the JiffyDOS @t command and it looks like garbage then don't, don't, *don't* convert it!

## CPU Magazine -The Magazine For Commodore 64/128 Enthusiasts Reappears

CPU Magazine is going bimonthly as of the #6 1998 Issue. We have added long time Commodore guru Jim Butterfield to our writing staff. Due to

an increase in production costs, a years subscription (6) Issues is as follows:

\$20 US address

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All monies must be in US dollars.

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SHELTON, WA. 98584

## Frequently Asked Questions Of Gateway 2000 At World of Amiga

From [www.amiga.com](http://www.amiga.com)

*Are you abandoning the Amiga?*

No, we are focusing our efforts on the development of the next generation architecture and operating system. We are working with third parties to create an open architecture necessary to bring the Amiga back for the future.

*Isn't the new Amiga really just a PC with Amiga slapped into it?*

While it is true that the next generation of Amiga will use the x.86 platform as a development system, this is meant to be used as a bridge to take the Amiga to version 5.0. Amiga 5.0 is a brand new Amiga, using the most evolutionary and revolutionary technology of software and hardware architectures.

*Why didn't you choose PowerPC*



Sneak preview of Amiga Developer Station

for the next generation Amiga platform?

The Motorola roadmap does not match our vision for the future that we have targeted for the Amiga. The Amiga Classic line will continue to support PPC as an accelerator [for] the current systems.

*So do I just throw away all of my Amiga applications and start over?*

No. The Amiga 4.0 will support most of your existing applications through software emulation. We are working with another third party hardware vendor to develop a hardware add-on (Amiga Classic Card) that will make the bridge system backwards compatible.

*Are you really abandoning the Amiga OS and licensing another OS?*

We are NOT abandoning the Amiga OS. We are investigating the option of leveraging a state of the art kernel of another OS to speed the development process and decrease our time to market the next generations of the Amiga OS.

**Summary:** We are focusing our energy on bringing the Amiga technology and the community into the 21st century, ahead of the pack. We will target our efforts on the operating system and an open architecture necessary to truly be a leader in the multimedia, digital convergence marketplace.

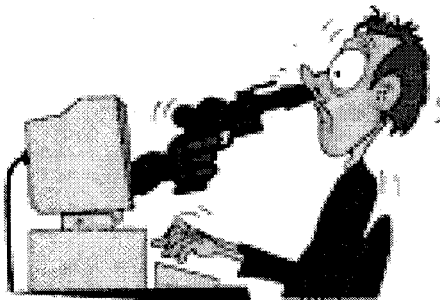
#### MEDIA CONTACT:

Bill McEwen  
Amiga Incorporated  
billm@amigainc.com  
<http://www.amigainc.com>

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## Net Abuse: Spam Attack Temporarily Cripples Softdisk Internet Services

By Jeff Jones. Spam is more than annoying. It can actually cripple an entire company. On June 13, 1998 no one at Softdisk could access the Internet. For several hours leading up to the network crash, the mail server began delivering multiple pieces of the same mail. By Saturday afternoon, Softdisk was completely dead. Even the Intranet



was dead. The cause? Millions of pieces of Email from a stealth spammer. Our servers stopped handling legitimate Softdisk business and choked trying to accommodate all of the spam.

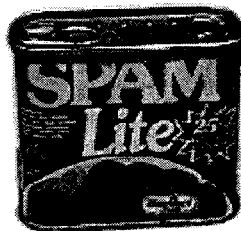
Stealth mailing is the trick of routing your mail in such a way that it can't be traced to you. The spammer wasn't even a Softdisk customer, but chose Softdisk as a conduit for tons of bits destined to annoy millions of people. He wanted anonymity because obviously his ISP would frown on such abuse and would likely drop him if people complained.

Softdisk isn't an Internet backbone. It's a small ISP. There are several powerful servers, but not powerful enough to route millions upon millions of pieces of Email.

The phones rang off the hooks as thousands of net-obsessed customers tried in vain to connect to the Internet. Softdisk lost face, and possibly customers while it struggled to get back online.

Why spam at the expense of the net itself? The notion is simple: If you Email 20 million people for free and get only one percent of the suckers to send you five bucks, you've made a killing. Every day, at least ten people try to make me into their next sucker. I'm also deluged with pleas for me to join the ranks of spammers.

No thank you. Currently email is free. It looks like the only way to get rid of spam is to either enact a new law, of which there are several floating around Congress, or to simply begin charging for Email beyond a certain non-commercial level. At even one cent a pop, 20 million emails suddenly becomes less attractive. 20 million cents comes out to \$200,000.



## Speaking of Spam, Once again Jeff Jones Is Fooled

By Jeff Jones. I got the following Email recently:  
Hello,

*My name is Julio Lansing and my sister Lea is suffering from a cancer that is terribly deadly... A local company in our area has agreed with us that they would take would take care a fraction of the cost of the surgery which would help us a lot.... JUST click on our link.*

<http://www.angelfire.com/la/pleasehelp124/index.html>

*Please, it's not too much to ask for.*

*Julio Lansing*

*Please get the word out and forward this...*

Ahem, I had a funny feeling, but I went ahead and visited the site and was told to "click here to help." Turned out I was routed to a sex/gambling site. Some of these sites will pay you 19 or so cents every time someone clicks on their ad from your site. This person got 19 cents because of me. There must have been complaints because the site was offline two days after I got the Email.

This would amount to mail fraud in the non-e-world. Spam must be stopped.

## Egg On My Face Again!

By Jeff Jones. Last month I detailed how CMD reset switches were so great because they didn't reset the serial devices. Well it turned out I was completely wrong — not about how it doesn't reset my serial devices — but how it *does* reset yours. It turns out my C-64C computer has a dirty or broken reset terminal in the cartridge port. No reset switch will reset my serial devices from that port. Duh! No wonder I hadn't noticed this wonderful feature until I switched computers!

## C64S Emulator Distributorship Exchanges Hands Again

By Jeff Jones. Apparently 20,000 units sold wasn't enough to keep Seattle Labs' interest. Seattle Labs was quite tightlipped about their reasons for dropping C-64S support, but their website pointed me to the new distributors in Denmark. The new www presence is at:

<http://www.phs-edv.de/c64s/>

They are having some problems translating Seattle Labs' database. In a note to Seattle Labs customers they said: "Since end of March 98 we took over the distribution of C64S also for the USA. SL is no longer supporting the product."

Unfortunately we don't have access to the registration files of SL till yet, so we can't decide in the moment who is a registered user. Don't use our registration form, because we are unable to decide if the number is ok."

*phs EDV Beratung GmbH  
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D-30449 Hannover  
Tel.: (49)-511-444193  
Fax: (49)-511-458 1524  
BBS: (49)-511-455 011*

## CS-DOS For Beginners

By Gaelyne R. Gasson. CS-DOS is an operating system that's mainly used to create and dissolve Commodore and MS-DOS archives such as ARC, LHA and SFX files. In 1992, rumors circulated that author Chris Smeets had sold the rights to CS-DOS to John Brown of Parsec. In recent times others have questioned this sale. The fact of the matter is that it's a nice operating system, but its ownership has been under a cloud for at least 5 years. The system can be found on BBSs and FTP sites, and it has additional archives for extra utilities that have been added to it.

When I first started using CS-DOS, I had already fully explored the C-64 program, ARC250.4 and wrote a fairly comprehensive article about using it, published in the now defunct CEE64

Alive! Magazine. I thought I should know what I was doing, yet I found myself giving up time and time again because I couldn't figure out what I was doing wrong. After many messages in the Fidonet CBM echo, I finally found the missing pieces to the puzzle. These puzzle pieces make all the difference in the world in using the system.

Aside from CP/M mode, CS-DOS is the closest you can get to using MS-DOS commands on a Commodore, and this is where the timid can quickly get lost. Instead of referring to disk drives as numbers (such as drive #8, 9, and so on), they are referred to by letter, and because author Chris Smeets had a few dual-disk drives, he used a slightly different naming convention than normal. Commodore DOS recognizes dual disk drives as device 0 and device 1 for each drive number. Smeets named these devices for drive #8 a and b, and for drive #9, the devices were named c and d. For those of us who don't have dual disk drives, it's easiest to remember the naming convention by saying the alphabet aloud, but skipping every other letter. In CS-DOS, drives a, c and e match drive numbers #8, #9 and #10. There are ways to tell CS-DOS which disk drive will be each designated letter, and this will be covered a little later.

### Setting up

First, make a backup of your CS-DOS disk and put it away for safekeeping. After you've configured the operating system to your liking, make sure to make another backup of your work disk so you can return to it in the event that your disk becomes corrupted.

The CS-DOS autoexec file is a sequential file that tells it how to configure itself when booted. With an REU (RAM Expansion Unit) available, CS-DOS has extra abilities, but the program needs to be told that it exists, and what areas of memory it can use. There are two different autoexec files in the archive package, one for users with an REU ("autoexec"), and one for those who don't ("autoexec.no1750"). If you have Ram expansion, you can erase "autoexec.no1750" from your work disk. If you don't have an REU,

rename the first autoexec file to "autoexec-old" (or delete it) and rename "autoexec.no1750" to "autoexec".

To load CS-DOS, type: `load "shell", 8 <return>`

The shell can be loaded from any disk drive, not necessarily from drive #8. Whatever drive you load the shell from becomes drive 'z' to the shell. This means that it uses this drive as the "program" drive, and defaults to it when looking for CS-DOS modules.

### CS-DOS Modules

Instead of loading the computer's memory with functions, each function is available separately on disk and loaded as needed. For instance, if you want to archive a program, you type in the command to do so, and the shell looks on the default disk for the module (program) it needs to create the archive. This is one reason CS-DOS is so powerful. It can do more because it doesn't have any limitations since the modules load from disk.

Sometimes it's more convenient to have the modules run from what's referred to as a "ramdisk". The ramdisk has nothing to do with whether or not you use an REU, except if you have one, the ramdisk can be much larger. The ramdisk is a file that's loaded by the autoexec when the shell is loading. It has the most common commands (modules) that are used by the system. Commands like "dir" for listing the directories, or "cold" for exiting CS-DOS and performing a cold reset of the computer.

The modules that I usually use are the archiving ones. To use them, they must first be installed in computer memory. To do this, the command is "install modulename", such as "install csarc".

Since I want the archive utilities to be available every time I use CS-DOS, after I installed them the first time, I saved the computer memory to a file named "ramdisk", and this is what the shell loads when it's booted. Having all the archive utilities loaded into memory lets me remove the CS-DOS work disk and insert the disk with files I want to compress or dissolve.

How many modules you can add to the ramdisk depends entirely on how much memory you have available. Without an

(Continued from page 4)

REU, you can add a few modules to the ramdisk, but occasionally you might need to remove a module from memory so you can load in another one.

The command **rdir/w** shows a list of modules installed in the ramdisk with the number of files and how many bytes are free, similar to a disk directory. After installing a module, if you type **rdir/w** and don't see the one you just installed, you'll know you didn't have enough memory for it. To remove a module from computer memory type: **remove modulename**.

Once you have the modules you want to use installed in the ramdisk, you'll want to save it to disk. Erase the current 'ramdisk' file by typing **del ramdisk**, and then save the current one by typing **putram ramdisk**. The next time you load CS-DOS, the ramdisk you've saved will be loaded into memory.

For those who don't have an REU, you can simplify your use of CS-DOS by creating several different ramdisks each with a different name. For instance, you can set up a ramdisk specifically for working with IBM ARC files, by installing **csarc** and **csxarc** and saving the ramdisk as "**arc-ram**" (the command is **putram arc-ram**). When you want to dissolve or create an IBM ARC file, once CS-DOS has booted, install the ramdisk you've saved by using the command **getram arc-ram**. In this way, you can have several personalized ramdisks for the modules you use most often.

## Commodore ARChives

Before you get too carried away with creating ramdisks, **arc128** should be renamed to **arc** so it matches the documentation. This module creates the same Commodore style archives that **ARC250.4** creates, but it doesn't use the same command format of '**arc/c arcname filename**'. Instead it uses the command "**arc/a arcname filename**". The '**/a**' stands for append, and if CS-DOS finds a file with the same name as the arcname, it appends to the existing archive, otherwise it creates a new file.

Another common pitfall for new users of CS-DOS involves spaces in file names. CS-DOS relies on spaces as a way of telling it a new command is coming its way. When trying to archive a

file with spaces in the name, use a question mark (?) instead of the space. For example if the file name is 'my file', and you're creating an ARC file, the command looks like: **arc/a arcname my?file**

Both the question mark and asterisk (\*) wildcards can be used. Some programs can create many like-named file names that you may want to archive at some time. In my case, I use The Fun Graphics Machine and one newsletter page can have several files named "**s.a1 name**" through "**s.c3 name**". If these were the only files on the disk, I could archive them by typing: **arc/a newsletter s.\*** Often though, there are a lot of other files on the disk that also start with "s.", and this is an instance when the question mark can come in handy.

So if I only archive the newsletter files, I would use the command '**arc/a newsletter s.???name**', and CS-DOS will ignore the three characters between 's.' and 'name'. The files will be combined into an archive named "**newsletter.arc**".

In the example above that I didn't use the ".arc" extension in the command (such as **newsletter.arc**) because CS-DOS adds it automatically.

Things get a little easier if you have two disk drives as you can create your archive on one disk and have the files be compressed in the other disk drive. This is when we use the drive letters that were mentioned earlier. Using the same newsletter example, we put the newsletter files on the disk in drive C (#9), and have a blank disk available for drive A (#8). The command we use is: **arc/a a:newsletter c:s.\***

Note that there's a colon between the drive letter and the rest of the command.

For archiving several files, copy them to one disk on drive C (#9) in the order you want them to be archived, and make sure there are no other files on the disk. Have a disk with plenty of space available in drive A, and type the command '**arc/a a:arcname c:\***'. (or using the newsletter example, '**arc/a a:newsletter c:\***'

When it comes time to use the newsletter files again, we'll need to dissolve them. The command to do this would be '**arc/x newsletter.arc**'. This will put the dissolved files on the same

disk as the archive. If you need the files to be on another disk, such as one in drive C (#9), the command would be '**arc/x c:newsletter.arc**'.

## MS-DOS Style ARChives and LHArchives

To create or dissolve MS-DOS style ARC files, the modules used are **csarc** (creation) and **csxarc** (dissolving). The commands are similar to the Commodore ARC commands, but without the '**/a**'.

### csarc arcname file file2

Creates an MS-DOS style ARChive named '**arcname.arc**'.

### csxarc file.arc

Dissolves an MS-DOS style ARChive. Include the '.arc' extension.

For creating LHArc style archives, you'll need an REU with at least 512K RAM. It creates an "**lzh**" format compressed file that's compatible with LZH version 1.x on other platforms.

### lha this file1 file2

Creates a file named "**this.lzh**".

### lhx file.lzh

Dissolve an .lzh file.

### lhx c:file.lzh

Dissolve an .lzh file onto drive C (#9).

## SFX Files

When the **lha** module is used with a '-s' parameter, it creates SFX ('Self eXtracting') archives. SFX files can be dissolved in either 64 or 128 mode by simply loading and running the program, which makes them very popular. The basic command to create an SFX is: '**lha -s that file1 file2**', which gives an archive named "**that.sfx**".

To create an SFX file that displays a title screen, you'll need to create a sequential file named "title". This file can include Commodore color and graphic characters, and can be formatted for either 40 or 80 screen columns (your choice). The "title" file must be archived before any of the other files in the archive as it's added to the header of the archive and is only displayed when the file is dissolved. For example: '**lha -s that title file1 file2**' creates an SFX file named "**that.sfx**" and will

display a title screen before prompting the user for the drives to dissolve the file onto. It's important to know that there are limits to the total size of an SFX file. For the file to be dissolved correctly in 64 mode, it must be no larger than 51200 bytes, and C128 mode files must be less than 48128 bytes.

## Command Summary

**a:** Makes drive a: the current default drive. (drive letter and colon)

**cold** Resets the computer. The ramdisk remains in the REU until overwritten.

**dir** List the directory of the current disk drive.

**dir a:** List the directory of drive a: (substitute any drive letter for "a:")

**del filename(s)** Deletes the file(s) from disk. Wildcards are okay, but be careful!

**ren oldname newname** Rename files. Wildcards are not accepted.

**copy a:file c:file** Copies file from drive a to drive c.

**copy a:file c:file2** Copies and renames file, from drive a to drive c.

**type filename** Sends contents of file to screen so you can read it.

**>** DOS command.  
Example: >cd//temp

**install module** Installs a module into the ramdisk.

**rdir/w** Displays contents of the ramdisk.

**remove modulename** Removes a module from the ramdisk.

**putram ramdiskname** Saves the current ramdisk to disk.

**getram ramdiskname** Installs a ramdisk from disk into memory.

**arc/a arcname filename** Creates an archive or appends to an existing one.

## The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

by Gaelyne R. Gasson

ISBN: 06-646-32207-9

The only Commodore C64/128 Internet reference guide, this 296 page manual takes you through hardware and software needed, how to get online and what you can do once you're there. It covers Email, World Wide Web, FTP, IRC, Telnet, Newsgroups, Commodore files, archives and much more.

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Also available from Loadstar. Item #900920

**arc/a a:arcname c:\*** Creates an archive on drive a: from the files on drive c:

**arc/x archivename** Dissolves an archive

**csarc name file1 file2** Creates an MS-DOS style ARChive named 'this.arc'.

**csxarc file.arc** Dissolves an MS-DOS style ARChive.

**lha that file1 file2** Creates an lharchive named "that.lzh".

**lhx file.lzh** Dissolves an .lzh file

**lha -s fun file1 file2** Creates an SFX file named "fun.sfx"

**lhd file.lzh** Displays a directory of the files within an lharchive.

### Drive designation:

Edit the autoexec file with a PetASCII text editor. At the end of the file, use the "assign" command to give letters to the disk drives (or CMD partitions) that you prefer to use. Examples:

**assign b 10,2** Drive #10, partition #2 becomes drive "b".

**assign c 11,0** Drive #11 becomes drive "c".

### CS-DOS Files:

You can find CS-DOS on BBSs and Commodore FTP sites.

**cs-dos15.sfx** Main archive

**cs-doc15.sfx** Documentation  
**cs\_asst1.sfx** Misc archiving tools (1 of 2)  
**cs\_asst2.sfx** Misc archiving tools (2 of 2)  
**lhav12.arc** Utilities for creating LZH files

## File Transfers between the Commodore 64 and the PET

By Robin Harbron. While the Commodore 64 is my first love when it comes to computers, I am fond of quite a few different platforms – particularly other Commodore machines, such as the Amiga, Vic-20 and the PET machines, but generally any older "classic" machine. I'd like to take a bit of time every month or two to write about what can be done with the brothers and sisters and third cousins twice-removed of our favorite machine – if you're interested. Please provide a bit of feedback about your interest in this topic, so we can continue to make Loadstar Letter enjoyable and informative every month.

The Commodore PET was my first introduction to computers. The letters PET apparently stand for Personal Electronic Transactor. The word Transactor was used as the name of an excellent technical magazine published in Canada – I remember buying it as a thirteen year-old, and only managing to understand about 10% of the articles.

More than a decade later, I'm still challenged by the wealth of information contained in those pages.

Commodore had to stop calling their computer the "PET", as another company apparently owned the rights to using that name. Commodore then made a new series of "CBM" machines, such as the CBM 4016 and CBM 8032. The first 2 digits in the number specify the number of columns the screen has, while the last 2 digits indicate the amount of RAM (measured in kilobytes) the machine has.

In 1978, a few of the kids I knew from school got PETs at home, and the following year the local school board started buying them, and a few appeared in my classroom. I remember being fascinated by the games – an excellent version of Space Invaders which caused the premature death of many 'A' keys (the A key was used to fire missiles at the descending aliens), Dungeon (a version of the mainframe game Rogue), Miner, Acid Rain, Weather – I could go on and on. Most of these games were written in Commodore BASIC with little or no machine code, and used only Commodore PetASCII graphics, which are the same character graphics you can bring up on your C64 by pressing the Commodore or Shift key while pressing any of the keys of the alphabet, and a few extra punctuation keys. Color was not available on the PET, and sound was very near non-existent.

These games are pretty much directly responsible for sparking my interest in computers, which then led me to university, and then on to my full-time job doing Internet work. I finally managed to purchase my own PET in 1990, when my high school was retiring their last few machines. I happily paid \$25 for the computer, and was even happier when one of my teachers drove me home with it after he saw me attempting to lug it home, a mile away.

I was thrilled when I found a number of games for the PET on the Internet – but how could I get them from my Commodore 64 to my PET? It's actually quite easy if you have the right equipment, and just know a trick or two.

The simplest way I know of to transfer files is to copy the files to a

1541 on your C64, and then attempt to read that disk on a 2031 attached to your PET. The 2031 and 2031LP (low profile, I believe) parallel drives use nearly the same disk format as the 1541. However, it is not identical, so some precautions have to be taken.

I found it best to first format the disk on the 2031 drive, then have the 1541 copy the PET files onto the 2031-formatted disk. I would then load that file into the PET's memory, using the same disk command that I use on my C64. Sometimes I would have to try multiple times to load the file, as the 2031 would act very much like there was an error on the disk, and try repeatedly to reload a particular block. Sometimes it would give up. But it had a much better chance of reading the disk if it was 2031 formatted, rather than 1541 formatted. I also found that loading the directory before loading, or sending the Initialize command to the drive first would help. Note that typing CATALOG (C shift-A for short) on the PET will do a directory display without disturbing memory (just like @\$ on a JiffyDOS C64). Also, try moving the drive to the opposite side of the PET if you are experiencing many read or write problems. I found both my disk drive and cassette drive worked much better if they were on the right hand side of the PET.

Once I had successfully LOADED the file, I SAVED the file to a different 2031 formatted disk, which had never been written to by a 1541. Since virtually all the files I was transferring were written in BASIC, they could simply be saved without needing to use any sort of copy program. Once the file is successfully saved on another disk, it will load very reliably. All the problems of loading are caused by the slightly different disk format.

Of course, if you're lucky enough to own a parallel disk interface, you could simply hook the 2031 directly up to your C64, and copy the files across. Also, look into finding a SFD1001 drive for your PET. This amazing drive somehow manages to save over 3000 blocks to a single double-sided, double density disk! Some people have complained that the drive isn't very reliable for long-term storage, but I haven't experienced any

problems in a number of years of occasional use – perhaps it doesn't hold up so well under the heavy-duty use of a Bulletin Board System.

Again, let me know if you'd like to see more articles of this nature – I'm open to requests.

## About Time for "Back In Time!"

Used with permission. February 27, 1998 Reviewer: The Shark Rating: (\*\*\*\*) 4 out of 5 Stars. (INC Press) -- Who is Chris Abbott? And who gave him the balls and vision to create a landmark CD where classic Commodore 64 tunes gets transformed into brilliant, awe inspiring reproductions?

Of course I am speaking about the highly anticipated C64 inspired CD named "Back In Time". The making of this CD has been known to the public for nearly a year now, and the greater the anticipation, the greater the expectations. The expectation was this: now 10 or more years later from their creation, shouldn't it be possible to reproduce classic C64 tunes on professional equipment making them sound ... well, you know... WOW!? Possible, yes. Unfortunately, many people have tried to do such and they have only fallen flat on their faces (Mod/XM composers are who I am primarily referring to here). Only Chris Huelsbeck's C64 based Rainbow Arts tribute CD and a rare Mod/XM here and there have made any improvements to C64 music. Huelsbeck's CD was so successful that it actually had to go into a second printing. Strangely enough, other old C64 musicians still haven't put two and two together to understand that there are people out there who would really like to hear this old music again!

Enter Chris Abbott. Abbott, as a C64 music fan, realized the absolute gold mine of old C64 tunes and the idea of modernizing them. Quite honestly, C64 fans have been begging, if not screaming, for such a project for quite sometime. Even during the C64's prime, Hubbard released the Thalamusic tape with "Zzap! 64" which rocked the C64 world. If it was so obvious that such a project was in high demand, what the hell took so damn



long?!

I believe that the main problem is that everyone was waiting for the original artists to create CDs based on their old works. After inquiring about such a project from many of the great composers, most reply by either stating that they are much too busy or that they feel there wouldn't be enough sales to support the project. This has lead me to one conclusion: musicians have a tendency to grossly undervalue their past work.

Knowing that these old musicians were not going to get the job done, Abbott set out to create the CD himself. You see, Abbott is not only a C64 fan, but he is also a musician -- a smart musician I might add. Knowing the mentality of these old musicians, he decided to simply ask for their help instead of asking for them to complete an entire CD. This move may have been the key to the success of the CD as both Hubbard and Huelsbeck agreed to help. Furthermore, Abbott used the right channels. That is, he thoroughly researched copyright laws, contacted game companies and composers, etc. ensuring that the CD would be 100% legal. Lastly, and most importantly, Abbott spent two years on this CD pouring as much quality into it as humanly possible. For example, professional equipment was used for this project and much feedback was received from the C64 music fan base. Rest assured that this CD is not simply someone dumping Mods and XM's on to an audio CD.

What's on the CD? Here is a song by song review (in order that they appear on the CD):

#01 - Delta 97 (Hubbard & Abbott)

Fabulous! Delta is perhaps one of the most popular C64 tunes covered in the Mod/XM world. Sadly, so many people manage to screw this tune up. Not this time. This is *the* best Delta I have ever heard! The screaming of the electronic trumpets is glorious! It is about G\$%\$#@ time that Hubbard crawled out of his cave and made some music.

#02 - Rambo: First Blood Part 2 (Abbott)

This famous Rambo loading tune starts off with some less than impressive Morse code sounds. A

better choice would have been some real Morse code sounds. Thankfully, the tune really starts to heat up right after the beginning. The echoing female chorus in the background gives this tune a heavenly sound.

#03 - Sanxion (Abbott)

Let me say that when I first heard this tune on the CD that I was expecting to hear Hubbard's own Thalamusic from "Zzap! 64". For nostalgic reasons, it would have been thrilling to have that version on CD. But as I listened to Abbott's version (\*gulp!\*), I have to say that I prefer his more precise cover of Sanxion compared to Hubbard's Thalamusic. So I applaud Abbott's decision to re-create this tune.

Unlike Hubbard's Jarre-meets-Pink Floyd version of Sanxion, the classic whining-screaming sound of Sanxion is beautifully done in this version!

#04 - Thing on a Spring (Abbott)

Chris Abbott has received some feedback from SID fans who have mentioned that they do not really care for Hubbard's original SID from this game. I should note that I too am not a big fan of this Hubbard classic. My opinion is that it suits the game well, but as a stand-alone tune, it is only "okay". If you are a "Thing on a Spring" fan, however, Abbott's version will not let you down.

#05 - Parallax (Abbott)

The start of this tune does not seem to hit the notes right compared to the original. Furthermore, there should be no background noise during those starting notes! That is what makes the start of Parallax so interesting -- it is building a climax. Just like Galway's version, Abbott's version gets better the further you get into the tune. The saving grace of Parallax, the most overrated SID in the world, is the ending, which is borrowed from Jarre. I was impressed on how well Abbott handled this cherished part of the tune.

#06 - Auf Wiedersehen Monty (Abbott & G. Priarone)

Ahhhhh! The start of this tune fails miserably compared to the original SID. This classic SID really has two captivating parts -- (1) the haunting beginning and (2) the splendid guitar solo later in the tune. As with Abbott's Rambo, the only bad part is the start. The rest of the tune is fast and furious just like the original. And what about

the guitar solo? Let's just say that you will wonder aloud if that is Eddie van Halen playing... :)

#07 - Mutants (Abbott & Waz)

Imagine Jan Hammer (Miami Vice fame) performing Fred Gray's Mutants then you will be able to predict how this tune sounds. Sometimes artists tinker or alter original songs in hopes of creating something magical. This is truly one of those rare cases where such tinkering has paid off. The mystic flutes with the familiar Mutants background was a brilliant idea, which is an understatement to say the least.

#08 - Great Giana Sisters (Huelsbeck)

I have never heard Huelsbeck's "Rainbows" CD, so this was an unexpected surprise. Huelsbeck keeps true to the original title tune of this masterpiece game offering the same spirited sound. I salute Huelsbeck for allowing this tune on this CD (although at no small cost I assume :).

#09 - Monty '97 (Hubbard & Abbott)

I do not recall anyone ever attempting to cover this tune. Why? I would imagine no one had the balls to attempt to cover this fast-paced masterpiece -- except the duo of Hubbard & Abbott. This tune is remarkable in C64 history mainly due to the fast rhythm and the multitude of instruments it unleashes. Before this tune played, I predicted that I would be blown away by Hubbard & Abbott using real-sounding instruments instead of the simulated sound offered by the SID. For the most part, this tune did exactly this. The only part of the tune that I seemed to dislike is the piano solo in the latter part of the tune which seems to carry on a little too much. Following the piano solo is the famous maniac violin solo which freakin' rocked!

#10 - Arkonoid (Abbott)

This cover is good, but it really offers nothing new or extra compared to the original.

#11 - Ocean Loading Theme v3.0 (Abbott)

Abbott has at his fingertips the chance to blow me away with some serious bass at the start of this tune, but where is the bass and power like the original SID? In addition, what is that strange sound which occurs through out



the tune? It sounds like Donald Duck blowing his nose -- yes, irritating. Although the melody of Abbott's cover is spot on compared to the original, his cover overall makes me want to skip to the next song.

#### #12 - Wizball (Abbott)

Turn off the lights and crank the volume up for this absolute superb rendition of the great Wizball cover theme! Such a rich and powerful sound emitting from my speakers as I type this review! I can easily envision this exact tune in a movie soundtrack -- an outer space epic journey searching for God Himself. Actually, after hearing this tune I believe I have just seen God. And no, Galway looks nothing like him. :)

#### #13 - To Be On Top (Huelsbeck)

Abbott writes in the CD sleeve, "This version of the tune is much lighter than the super-crunchy original." I was thinking the exact same thing when hearing this revised version. I'll take the super-crunchy original over this version any day. Overall, Huelsbeck's revision of this tune is nice, but damn it, I want that grinding-crunchy sound.

#### #14 - Crazy Comets 97 (Hubbard & Abbott)

I was wondering if the duo was going to be able to pull off this cover. The original has so many crazy sounds and spin off effects -- enough to wonder how Hubbard ever pieced this classic into enjoyable music. The cover from start to finish is simply fantastic! Not a single beat was missed from this crazy tune. But wait, there's more! As an added bonus, echoing speech samples from the game "Mega Apocalypse" are spread through out the tune. I would have predicted that adding those speech samples would have ruined this tune, but just the opposite happened. I love the samples! Did I mention that this tune is capped off by a classic Hubbard speed-synth attack?

#### #15 - Delta Victory (Abbott)

I doubt this sub-tune would fall into most peoples' top 500 list of favorite SIDs (although the title theme would). When I first saw this tune listed on the CD, I thought, "What the hell was Abbott thinking?" I am certainly not saying that Hubbard's original tune is crap, but there were simply so many more good tunes to choose from. Then

I listened to the tune on the CD and fell in love with Abbott's mesmerizing masterpiece. Abbott was able to see the potential in Hubbard's tune and has improved it 10 fold. Gone from Abbott's version is the annoying fast beat background sound found in Hubbard's original. Instead you will find a peaceful, slow drum. As for the lead sound, Abbott's choice of a soft trumpet was absolutely perfect. You will reach tranquility with this tune.

When Chris Abbott was working on this CD, he requested some input from the some of the biggest SID fans in the world asking how he should go about recreating these SID classics. My offerings were to mention that he should avoid remixing the SIDs, and stick with super enhanced versions of the SIDs. Remixes seldom succeed, plus most SID fans I know want to hear the old tunes with out a major overhaul. To his credit, I believe Chris had already made up his mind to go with this approach even before me emailing him. I also mentioned to him that he was treading on sacred ground. That is, he was attempting to mess with some classic SIDs knowing fully that the expectations were extremely high (as if he didn't already know this!). I can honestly say that with the release of this CD, Chris has earned his wings as a respectable SID covering artist meeting the expectations laid upon him. This is a landmark CD and any SID fans who lacks this CD from their collection will have a quiet void in their lives. Congratulations Chris, et al. You have successfully brought to life something long overdue.

## Interview with Nate Dannenberg

By Robin Harbron. Nate Dannenberg is a well-known name in the online Commodore world. He was a part of Arkanix Labs' Commodore division, with both software and hardware contributions, and he also regularly shares his knowledge with others in comp.sys.cbm.

**Robin:** Hi there, Nate. Could you give us a bit of info on both your interests in and out of the Commodore world?

**Nate:** Well, I've recently graduated

from college (I can now write "AA" behind my name, heh). When it comes to Commodore and the real world, it basically boils down to this: Whatever money I have free that isn't reserved for groceries, bills, and the like, goes either to my Commodore or my 1979 Mustang.

I like spending money now and then to update or enhance my C128-D, but I won't pour any money into a modern PC until the market calms down. It's just too volatile right now. That \$3000 PC I drool over in the gaming magazines won't be worth \$300 next year. My Commodore won't either of course, but at least I know that money-wise, it hasn't really lost its value as fast.

**Robin:** Probably the one thing you're most known for is working with digital sound on the Commodore machines - why this particular interest?

**Nate:** Well, I got to playing around with a friend's PC one day, dinking around with WAV files and other digital sound files. I thought to myself, "I want to make my computer do this. Can't be too terribly hard can it?" Of course at the time I started messing with sound, I was still using a little Timex/Sinclair 1000. It wasn't until Christmas 1985 or so, about the same time the Commodore C64C came out, did I finally get a machine that would become my legacy, as it were.

One day I got to playing around with the SID, seeing what kinds of noises I could make it produce. I stumbled upon register \$18 (the volume control), and found I could make it click and pop by stuffing random numbers into it. Then I started playing with simple waveforms, using counters in BASIC to stuff numbers in to make triangles, saws and other simple sounds.

The rest, as they say, was history. I knew then and there that I could make the machine produce any sound I wanted to, if I fed the right numbers to the SID chip.

**Robin:** Modplay 64 and 128 are pretty amazing programs - what gave you the idea to try doing something that had

never been done on our 8-bit machines? (Note for readers: .mod files are a particular type of music file that were first invented and popularized on the Amiga in the late 80's. Since then they have found widespread use on other platforms, especially the PC.)

**Nate:** This one doesn't go back as far as the idea of playing with digital sound in general. Actually, this goes back to the days when our local computer club was called the "C&AUGW - Commodore & Amiga Users Group of Wichita [KS]". One day, I heard an Amiga playing some really nice sounding music with real instruments. I asked the man at the console what it was playing, and he told me it was a MOD. I questioned him about it, as I had heard that Amigas could only play four voices of music. The MOD he was playing was running in eight voices.

That was when I started on the great information hunt - trying to scrounge up every little bit of information I could about the MOD format. It started kind of lean actually, first downloading MODs and trying to play them with a WAV player like DigiPlayer 3.0.

Then someone told me that Mods actually used chunks of music instead of continuous sound like a WAV or RAW file. He told me they normally lasted around 4 or 5 seconds or so. Ah hah! They're predictable! I got to digging through the information I had on hand, and I was able to piece it together somewhat: MODs have music information and sound samples, separated into discrete chunks.

It was only a matter of time before I wrote my first little decoder program. All it could do was open a MOD file and tell me about it - what the instrument names were, how many samples it had, and what kind of notes were present in the song data area.

It took some doing, but I eventually came up with a way to mix the sounds - first by always playing everything at full volume, and timed by using counters. Later that progressed into playing sounds at different volume levels, and the timing was later changed to be controlled by the CIA's hardware

timers. The different notes are made by using stepper routines that count through sample data. That routine can run anywhere from one sample byte every 255 loops, to every 255th byte, in steps of 1/255 byte per loop.

After that it was a matter of optimizing my code and making the program run faster and better. I took many suggestions from friends such as George Taylor, and got the program where it is today.

**Robin:** Sound Studio is the other program of yours I'm familiar with. I spent a bit of time recording and playing back digital samples with it. Do you have any future plans for this program?

**Nate:** Sometime in the future, I plan to make another upgraded version. I hope to have developed my coding skills enough by then, to be able to combine it with Modplay 128 (or perhaps a 128 port of the more powerful 64 version), and add editing and recording facilities.

I want it to be able to use any type of RAM you can throw at it, and to run with or without a Super CPU in all modes. I want the program to use today's hardware the way Commodore users expect it to - for speed, power, and functionality.

I would like to add video-handling facilities to the program as well, however nothing is concrete about this yet.

In short, I want to make the program the ultimate digital media production tool for the Commodore 128 (or even the C64). I don't want it to compete with Arndt Dettke's GoDot software though - this is for an entirely different purpose. Multimedia on the Commodore made simple at last.

**Robin:** From what I understand, all your programs have become freeware, when previously they were commercial and/or shareware. Why the change of direction? Do you expect to do commercial programming again in the future?

**Nate:** The conglomerate program I am

considering (as a mix of Sound Studio, Modplay, and some sort of video tools) will probably not be the only commercial tool I'll do in the future.

AVLink will be another program that I expect to be commercial - only time will tell of course. (Note to readers: AVLink is an Internet phone type program that was in development when Arkanix Labs ceased C64 support.)

**Robin:** Who do you look up to and/or admire in the Commodore community, and why?

**Nate:** This may sound like a bit of a plug (hey, free advertising!), but the folks at CMD are the people I look up to - they've created things for the Commodore that far exceed anything previously available. It is with their tools that I'm able to write the programs I write.

**Robin:** I'm one of the few lucky people who have a sound digitizer made by you - it's obvious that you know what you're doing when it comes to electronics. Could you outline some of the various devices you have designed or built?

**Nate:** There are a few things I have going right now. First there is the digitizer you mention. It's called the "8BSS" and allows a C64 to sample sound in two channels with 8-bit resolution. It's very low noise, and it can run far faster than anything anyone would ever need. This card uses the User Port. Sound Studio, and a few other programs not written by others, can use this card to sample in 4-bit mono. I hope to make that program exploit this card (or one of its planned derivatives) more fully in the future.

Another device I made was the DigiMax card, which is simply a MAX505 chip interfaced to the User Port. It can output up to four channels of 8-bit sound and is compatible (in full 8-bit stereo) with Modplay 64 and 128.

My current project, which is temporarily on hold, is what I like to call "QuickScan". It is an interface board for the C64 or 128 that will allow one to use a Connectix Quickcam (PC

version) to digitize video into your 64. I have a prototype made, but it hasn't been tested yet.

Yet another project is what I call the PowerSID board. This board, invented by Shaun Halstead and I as part of an effort to go beyond any current music output capabilities (short of going to MIDI), is expected to be able to hold up to EIGHT SID chips (on two stacked boards), to provide up to 24 additional voices of surround-sound. This board is expected to house the capabilities of the DigiMAX and 8BSS boards as well.

In the future, I would like to combine these cards into a single sound and video board for the C64 (sound out and in, video in only), perhaps to be used by the unnamed conglomerate sound/video program I mentioned.

**Robin:** Are any of your products for sale since Arkanix Labs dropped 8-bit Commodore support?

**Nate:** 8BSS, DigiMax, and a dual SID board (which I didn't mention above) are still available. Prices on these boards need to be adjusted for the absence of a distributor to share profits with. I would expect them to sell in the \$20 to \$30 range.

The QuickScan board, on the other hand, is easy to make, and can probably be made for under \$20. The PowerSID board, however, will be closer to the \$50 range without any SID chips. This, too, may come down in price. It depends on what I find for parts and supplies, and what my suppliers choose to charge me.

**Robin:** I hear you've been working on a C64/128 tower computer. I'd like to hear more about that.

**Nate:** It took some planning and a lot of work, but now much of my system is inside a PC tower case. I can't really say much about it at this point really - a lot of what I had was almost a drop-in fit.

The Tower is based on a Commodore 128-DCR motherboard (from the US metal-cased version of that computer).

When the tower is completed, it will have the following specs:

Commodore 128-DCR w/16Mb CMD  
Super 64 CPU  
Cardinal 33.6K modem with Turbo232 cartridge  
CMD HD with 2.4GB Seagate Hawk  
CMD FD-2000 with RTC option  
CMD 1750XL 2-megabyte REU  
CMD RAMLink, with 13 MB and RTC option.  
Stereo SID chip and DigiMAX card share the same audio output jack.  
Standard Commodore 1571 drive

The interesting thing to say is that, while building the tower hasn't been at all difficult, keeping everything together has. Because much of my equipment is beginning to age, I've found myself simply leaving the tower sitting up on my desk while I use it, in case something needs fixed or adjusted.

But like an old car, if you stick with it long enough, eventually you get it to a point where all it needs is a good coat of paint to finish things up. Sooner or later the machine will be finished and I will be able to close the cover and put the tower in its rightful place - under my desk in the spot specifically intended to accept a tower computer.

**Robin:** What future plans do you have in the Commodore realm?

**Nate:** Actually I find this a bit of a broad question. The easiest way to answer it is to quote someone I once read in Compute's Gazette: "I guess I'll just keep pounding away on this thing until the keys fall off!" Having said that, I have one spare working C128-DCR with keyboard, as well as yet another spare keyboard :-)

I don't plan to give up using this machine unless I am simply forced to. That means every programmer in the Commodore realm is going to have to stop coding good tools like Ace and Novaterm, and companies are going to have to start making changes that will specifically prevent Commodores from being used for online purposes.

Since I don't see either of these

happening anytime soon, I can say that I feel quite comfortable where I am at, however buggy my machine might be ;)

**Robin:** Thanks for the interview - Loadstar Letter wishes you good luck in your future plans.

## Letters To the Editor

Dear Fender,

I don't like to write critical letters, but for some time I have wondered how you find enough subscribers for the Loadstar Letter. As you know, I have worked in the Commodore environment for quite a few years, and consider myself to have at least medium experience and expertise on the machines. I do not get on the Internet because I really don't have any desire to unless I need to find a special bit of information.

Loadstar Letter seems to me to be slanted strictly toward the highly technical types who do a lot of work on demos and specialty items, and this is good because we need these people and the work they do. But the majority of Commodore users don't seem to be interested in such things, and if they are, they care about what is available and "how can I use it". They are not interested in a long dissertation about how it works, or how it was developed. This is very apparent if you spend any time in a users group. Despite the fact that our area here has a lot of highly technical people because of the space program, very few of our club members care about the detailed workings of the programs or equipment.

Often things are not explained very well. In #57 the article on Wheels 64 doesn't tell what it is. Maybe it was in earlier editions, but if so I did not pick up on it. The article on GoDot is quite confusing, especially when one paragraph states that "GODOT does not have higher resolution than Doodle" while another says "It is the special 4-bit format that allows a higher definition on a C64 than is possible with Doodle."

I have noticed too that articles about special problems that you Internet users get involved with are much too long. It's much like the old saying about "beating a dead horse", or maybe "KISS" (keep it simple...) would be more appropriate. I remember one

article by Jim Brain about people who criticized him rambled on for several pages. Maybe you have enough subscribers that enjoy reading this kind of stuff, and if you do more power to you. I have spent many years of authoring books and magazine articles and I'm sorry to say that LS' content does not turn me on. I hope you will take this letter as constructive criticism. Which it is meant to be?

Sincerely,  
Wm. O. Nelson

Jeff: I saw this letter at Loadstar and thought it was better suited for the Loadstar Letter. Robin and I have been brainstorming about how we want the Newsletter to evolve. We want a balance. We also want to eventually match the number of pages in Commodore world and exceed them. In that content, we want to have stuff for beginners, but I have actively avoided your typical newsletter filler such as Poke lists and strange SYSES.

I'll be the first to admit that some articles can be confusing. Some of them even go over *my* head, but I get Email from some who appreciate it. I'm aware that the Loadstar Letter has been very technical in the past, but I usually try to balance it out with plain news and other content. If Robin writes an article on how to connect your C-64 to Arnold Swartzenegger, I'll suggest to him to tone down next issue.

The bottom line is though that we must make room for the technical. Not too much and not too little, because we must inspire new programmers so that you'll have new Commodore software to run in the future.

Take a look at the Loadstar Letter in future months and see if it balances out better for you.

## You're Running A What On Your C-128?

I had this Email exchange last month. I'll get you an update as I get more information.

Dear Jeff,

Are there any plans to make a CD in Commodore format rather than .D64 format? I have a CD drive on my 128, and not having to fool around with .D64

conversion would be cool. It would also be a neat way to promote CD use on CBM systems. My CD drive has brought me endless hours of fun, and I'd love to see more support for it.

John Hoepker

Jeff: What?!? Please, please *PLEASE* elaborate on your CD. We had no idea anyone had a working CD on a CBM 8-bit. Point me to a web page if there is one.

John: No problem. It was so easy to do that I have been astounded that more people aren't doing it. I found an old IBM (Yeck!) SCSI CD drive at the local Goodwill store for \$10.00. I even found a SCSI to DB25 (Macintosh style) cable for \$5.00. I plugged it into the SCSI port of the HD, and that was all there was to it as far as hardware. I downloaded CD ROM COMMANDER from either FUnet or Jim Brain's site (can't remember exactly) and that was it. I cannot boot a program off the CD drive- it must be transferred to disk first. This program is a 128 mode 80 column program that is written in German, but is easy to figure out. It loves the SuperCPU 128 too :) I'm not sure how the 64 guys do it, but I have heard it possible. I have also heard of a program written by an Eric Kudzin of Chicago that plays music CDs on a 64. I am planning to contact him, but if you want more info about it, I heard it from Maurice Randall. If I learn anything more, I'll drop you a line.

Thanks,  
JH

Jeff: To answer John's questions, Fender and I have considered doing a Loadstar yearbook where we place everything Loadstar has done in a year onto a CD. This would include all back issues for a year or two and all of our products. We could easily save all the files in both D64 format and MS Joliet subdirectories with full Commodore filenames. We'll have to study up on the CD ROM Commander.

The hardest part about such a product is coming up with the price. How low can we go before we shoot ourselves in the foot? If we charged the full price or even half price for each item, very few would even think about buying it.

I remember a long time ago a person wrote us and cancelled because he said

that Loadstar had so much stuff on it that it was piling up on him. So he'd get back with us when he caught up. He was a happy camper, but we weren't during his hiatus. It was missing revenue. Now imagine the hiatus of people who buy the CD!

Hi y'all,

Back in Time Commodore 64 Audio CD has now sold over 400 copies (woohoo), thanks to committed C64 fans! Once sales hit 500 copies, I can start commissioning music for the sequel: which will feature, amongst other things:

At least one arrangement from Fred Gray, an original piece and a cover from Tim Follin...

And planned: Kentilla (Orchestral), Jogeir Liljedahl's mix of Terra Cresta, and an improved Green Beret loader, Warhawk, WAR, Knucklebusters, Delta In-game improved and more: the aim is for the second volume to feature guest instrumental performances, including some from Benn Daglish himself. Other projected participants include Matt Furniss (Comets and Rambo 98 creator) and of course, Rob.

For those who haven't bought it yet: we'd be incredibly grateful if you would, so we can go ahead and get everyone volume 2 started.

(The secure online ordering page is on <https://www.netbanx.com/c64audio/cgi-bin/precode.pl>) (BTW: the deluxe option INCLUDES a standard Audio CD).

Sorry that the MPEGs haven't been activated on the site yet: this is because of lack of disk space currently at [samhain.c64.org](http://samhain.c64.org).

Thanks for your continuing good wishes, and keep on sidding!

Chris

# Cryptic #58

By Fender Tucker

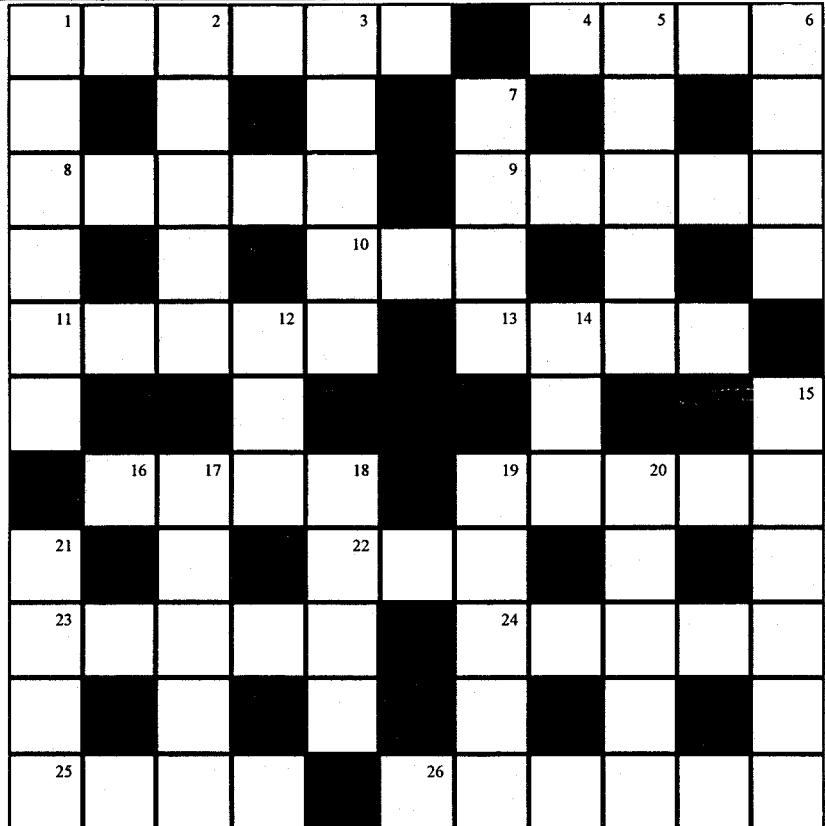
## ACROSS

1. I heard it's real slick in this country (6)
4. As each is away from land (4)
8. King, by any yardstick (5)
9. Good at getting taped awkwardly (5)
10. East-heading railroad is a mistake (3)
11. Blue can seems to say, "You are inside!" (5)
13. South Dakota imports an ubiquitous sight at the beach (4)
16. Tone poem describes western golf tournament (4)
19. Disco Dick gets this when he's fired? (5)
22. Cockney doxy digs it? (3)
23. Kennedy invited the UN to get aligned (5)
24. The place for treasure is awfully overt (5)
25. Letter from Greek? Latin? Everyone else? (4)
26. Satrap destroyed militaristic city-state (6)

## DOWN

1. Belt the silly girl, Ed (6)
2. Swiss mathematician found in *Rue le Strange* (5)
3. Gen. Lee initially gets into what a cow chews, is healed (5)
5. Inferior Nikes make a quantity of yarn (5)
6. Stop Spanish vocal range (4)
7. Planet ruins (4)
12. Biker holds Sweet Betsy's hubby (3)
14. Sort of has a tree (3)
15. Heat an aggravated goddess (6)
17. Dizzy and Pa make a Chinese bear (5)
18. Lymphatic lump is malignantly done (4)
19. Preparatory routines allow alien in to eat (5)
20. Dorothy loses her head over French love (5)
21. I hear your pen's got an eye problem (4)

Answers in next month's LOADSTAR Letter.



## Answers to last month's puzzle

### ACROSS

1. FORTY-LOVE - FORTY + O
8. RIGHT - Homophone of RITE
9. FUNGI - Pun on FUN GI
10. ERNIE - Anagram of IRENE
11. ROLLS - Pun on ROLLS ROYCE
12. HARES - Anagram of SHARE
15. NABOB - Reversed in clue
17. OFTEN - OF + TEN
18. SALEM - MALES backwards
19. TOUCHDOWN - TOUCH + DOWN

### DOWN

2. ORGAN - Double definition
3. TITHE - Hidden in clue
4. LIFER - Anagram of RIFLE
5. VENAL - Hidden in clue
6. FREE THROW - Anagram of FORT WHERE
7. FIRST BASE - Pun
13. RATIO - RAT + I + O
14. SONIC - Double definition
15. NAMED - DEMAND backwards minus the first D
16. BELOW - BE + LOW

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## STARR REDIRECTS FOCUS: DID MONICA BUY LOADSTAR LETTER AT BOOKSTORE?

By Jeff Jones. "This could be it!" said White House spokesman, Thomas Kent, as he scuttled up the steps. "How can we ever get out from under this stigma? If the President is ever associated with that rag in any way, it's the end of the administration..."

When asked if he had ever seen the Loadstar Letter anywhere in the White House, Kent responded, "This matter is still under investigation."

## HOW TO TELL IF TECHNOLOGY HAS TAKEN OVER YOUR LIFE

1 Your stationery is more cluttered than Warren Beatty's address book. The letterhead lists a fax number, e-mail addresses for two on-line services, and your Internet address, which spreads across the breadth of the letterhead and continues to the back. In essence, you have conceded that the first page of any letter you write is the letterhead.

2 You can no longer sit through an entire movie without having at least one device on your body beep or buzz.

3 You need to fill out a form that must be typewritten, but you can't because there isn't one typewriter in your house -- only computers with laser printers.

4 You think of the gadgets in your office as "friends," but you forget to send your father a birthday card.

5 You disdain people who use low Baud rates.

6 When you go into a computer store, you eavesdrop on a salesperson talking with customers -- and you butt in to correct him and spend the next twenty minutes answering the customers' questions, while the salesperson stands by silently, nodding his head.

7 You use the phrase "digital compression" in a conversation without thinking how strange your mouth feels when you say it.

8 You constantly find yourself in groups of people to whom you say the phrase "digital compression." Everyone understands what you mean, and you are not surprised or disappointed that you don't have to explain it.

9 You know Bill Gates' e-mail address, but you have to look up your own social security number.

10 You stop saying "phone number" and replace it with "voice number," since we all know the majority of phone lines in any house are plugged into contraptions that talk to other contraptions.

11 You sign Christmas cards by putting :) next to your signature.

12 Off the top of your head, you can think of nineteen keystroke symbols that are far more clever than :-).

13 You back up your data every day.

14 Your wife asks you to pick up some minipads for her at the store and you return with a rest for your mouse.

15 You think jokes about being unable to program a VCR are stupid.

16 On vacation, you are reading a computer manual and turning the pages faster than everyone else who is reading John Grisham novels.

17 The thought that a CD could refer to finance or music rarely enters your mind.

18 You are able to argue persuasively that Ross Perot's phrase "electronic town hall" makes more sense than the term "information superhighway," but you don't because, after all, the man still uses hand-drawn pie charts.

19 You go to computer trade shows and map out your path of the exhibit hall in advance. But you cannot give someone directions to your house without looking up the street names.

20 You would rather get more dots per inch than miles

per gallon.

21 You become upset when a person calls you on the phone to sell you something, but you think it's okay for a computer to call and demand that you start pushing buttons on your telephone to receive more information about the product it is selling.

22 You know without a doubt that disks come in five-and-a-quarter and three-and-a-half-inch sizes.

23 Al Gore strikes you as an "intriguing" fellow.

24 You own a set of itty-bitty screw-drivers and you actually know where they are.

25 While contemporaries swap stories about their recent hernia surgeries, you compare mouse-induced index-finger strain with a nine-year-old.

26 You are so knowledgeable about technology that you feel secure enough to say "I don't know" when someone asks you a technology question instead of feeling compelled to make something up.

27 You rotate your screen savers more frequently than your automobile tires.

28 You have a functioning home copier machine, but every toaster you own turns bread into charcoal.

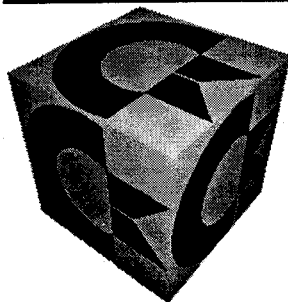
29 You have ended friendships because of irreconcilably different opinions about which is better - the track ball or the track "pad".

30 You understand all the jokes in this message. If so, my friend, technology has taken over your life. We suggest, for your own good, that you go lie under a tree and write a haiku. And don't use a laptop.

31 You email this message to your friends over the net. You'd never get around to showing it to them in person or reading it to them on the phone. In fact, you have probably never met most of these people face-to-face.

-- TTFN! Brian

Noesis Creation -- The home of Archaic Computer:  
<http://www.angelfire.com/id/noesis> The Archaic  
 Computer Gallery -- Home of The Gallery & Dee El:  
<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Peaks/9595>  
 The New Home of dieHard Back Issues: [http://](http://members.tripod.com/~noesis0/index.html)



This cube is from Pete Karlsson's web page.  
<http://www.mds.mdh.se/~dat95pkn/8bitar/>

## LOADSTAR LETTER #58

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